

From then on, no funeral is complete without the droopy visage of the jester. If there's a lull in the weeping, one has only to look at his face for inspiration.

The jester beams. An audience is an audience he says to his wife

A PARROT

A parrot arrives at a tiny pet shop. An ordinary looking parrot: green and gold with a dash of blue.

His first day at the store, a woman gives him a cracker. "Vous êtes Française?" asks the parrot, and proceeds to speak fluent French with a flawless accent. The woman leaves, pronouncing him "charmant."

The owner gawks! Asks the parrot if he speaks English. "I expect you might say it's my native tongue," says the parrot, slapping his thigh with his wing. It turns out he speaks many languages, including Olde English, Bantu and some Greek.

Great thinkers flock from all over the world to see him. They discuss esthetics, quantum physics, the energy crunch, etcetera.

While having a friendly argument with a Viennese analyst Freud, he notices throngs of people at the window. Kids jam the store, shrieking. Alas, he's become famous, a freak! And no more talks with his interesting friends.

To top it all, a TV crew appears. A ridiculous man shoves a microphone at his beak. Sadly, the parrot looks at the pet shop owner. "Polly want a cracker," he says to the camera. "Cra--cker! Cra--cker! Polly want a cracker!" he squawks.

-- Judith Berke

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GOLDY LOCKS MADONNA: 1

has been in every bed